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SURVEY OF PUBLICATIONS AVAILABILITIES IN NORTHERN ITALY

20 MAY TO 10 JUNE 1959

Purpose of the Survey:

The volume of published materials issuing from Northern Italy had attracted the attention of several professional library organizations in the United States. A statistical review of known publications produced in Northern Italy revealed that over 26% of all publishing in Europe appeared to be done in this region. Never before had so high a percentage of the total issuances of Europe been attributed to a single region. We were interested in knowing why this situation obtained. A further purpose was to determine whether any one book dealer could accept responsibility for selection of new materials being published in Italy. This latter purpose included also antiquarian materials.

Conclusions:

1. The intensified publishing activity in Northern Italy was attributable to two major factors in addition to the straight economics of the publishing industry. The first of these factors was the excellent linguistic talent present in the region. One informant explained that he had listings of persons capable of translating between any two major languages of the world, and that all of these people lived within a few hours train ride from Florence. Another informant commenting on the quality of translation produced by his linguistic staff said that virtually no editing before publication was required. The plan for the publication of a polylingual encyclopedia of science was generating a search for linguists with scientific backgrounds at the time I was visiting Florence. This encyclopedia was to be published for a American publishing house of the first rank.
2. The second major factor which contributed to the intensification of publishing activity in Northern Italy was the development of superior methods of paper production and a technique for reproduction by printing methods of art works that is clearly better than anything before used. A bilingual (English and Italian) encyclopedia of art in production had superb reproductions of paintings, etchings and sculpture. This 18 volume publication will sell for 340,000 lira or \$500.
3. The whole of the Italian book publishing industry can be covered by orders through one group of book dealers called "Librerie Italiane Riunite" (LIR). This group has representation in Bologna, Florence, Milan, Palermo, Rimini, Rome, Turin, Trieste, and Verona. Its "Bollettino Bibliografico" (for current materials) and its "Notiziario Occasioni LIR" (for older and used books) are available from - Ufficio Informazioni Librerie, Via Tornabuoni 70r, Firenze (Florence), Italy.

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4. For antiquarian materials, I was able to identify a single dealer in each of the cities visited. In the discussion below the names and addresses of these dealers are given. However, all the dealers visited agreed as did the USIS librarians that Libreria Antiquaria Olshki, Via XX Settembre 56, Florence was the most reliable antiquarian and had best access to knowledge on particular types of materials of any in Italy (some even considered Olshki as the best in Europe).

5. My attention was called repeatedly to the fact that the library which wishes to be au courant on the Italian book publishing industry should not rely on the "Bibliografia Nazionale Italiana". The September 1958 issue had just come out in May 1959 and the index to the 1957 issues was not yet available. "Giornale della Libreria" published by the Societa Anonima per Pubblicazioni Bibliografico-Editoriali (S.A.B.E.), Foro Bonaparte 24, Milano, appears in 28 regular and 4 special issues per year for 3500 lira subscription rate. This publication is right up to date and permits current selection. The special issues deal with a single type of publication such as encyclopedias or dictionaries. In Florence the Centro Internazionale Bibliografico publishes lists of publications classified according to the following subjects: agriculture, publicity, chemistry, law, economics and statistics, medicine, engineering, architecture, technology, business administration, and natural sciences.

Cities Visited:

1. Trieste: Because we could find no record of a previous survey of the book trade in Trieste, every dealer of significance in that city was contacted. I am indebted to Dr. Dory de Pretis, the USIS Librarian, and Dr. Sauro Pesante, Vice-Director of the Biblioteca Civica, Piazza Bortig 4, for reviewing my findings and verifying my observations. For historical materials of the Trieste area, two book shops were outstanding:

Libreria Antiquaria Umberto Saba, Via San Nicolo 30, Trieste
(for collector's items and manuscript materials)

Libreria Misan, Piazza Vecchia 4, Trieste
(for history of Istria and Dalmatia; history of marine architecture)

The LIR representative in Trieste is:

Libreria Internazionale Minerva, Via San Nicolo 16, Trieste
(covers medicine, electronics, law, chemistry, physics, architecture, dictionaries, economics, sociology, art, philosophy, education, psychology, political science, history, agriculture, geography.)

and is probably the best and most reliable outlet in Trieste. Other book stores visited include:

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Libreria L. Cappelli, Corso Italia 12

(science, social science, technology, technical dictionaries,
University of Trieste publications, publishes "Metroeconomics")

Libreria de Stark Rossoni, Via Mazzini 40, Trieste

(translations of non-Italian publications in paper-back editions,
school books)

Pia Societa Figlie di S. Paolo, Corso Italia 37, Trieste

(religious books only)

Libreria E. Paravel, Piazza della Borsa 15, Trieste

(popular magazines from other European countries and the US,
pocket books)

Libreria Moderna Zigiotti, Corso Italia 3, Trieste

(scientific-technical, fine arts, school books, maps, dictionaries,
law, medicine, has own publishing house for historical materials
on the Triestino region)

Libreria Universitas, Viale XX Settembre 16, Trieste

(small shop dealing in reference books for school use)

Libreria Internazionale Treves, Via Dante 14, Trieste

(general stock of non-Italian books and translations of same,
popular paper-back novels, some science)

A publication of the Biblioteca Civica worth mentioning is "Archeografo Triestino". This journal has been published annually since 1829 and covers the local history and archeology of the Trieste region.

2. Venice: In preparing for the survey, it seemed that there must be some error in the small number of book shops listed in Venice. Actual survey showed that this condition does indeed exist. As one dealer put it: "The Venetians are too busy taking lire from the tourists to buy and read books." It was also related that there is a tradition among the book dealers in Venice to the effect that they pass around the privilege of selling the one book per year to a Venetian. The only antiquarist in Venice deals in Italian classics and publishes no catalog. He told me that he depends on a "walk-in" trade of tourists for most of his business, which includes paintings as well as books and manuscripts. He deals only in materials of the Venetian area.

Libreria Antiquaria G. Cassini, Calle Larga XXII Marzo 2424, Venice

The former leader in old and rare book sales in Venice, Libreria Ascoleo Organia, Piazza San Marco 67, has gone over to dealing in paintings. Sig. Organia did tell me that he initiated searches for customers of his father who had run the antiquarist many years ago. The totality of book dealers in Venice other than kiosks and school book sales is represented by the following listing:

Libreria Sansovino, Piazza San Marco 84, Venice

(art, science, economics, popular editions of technical
books, English and German paper-backs for the tourist trade.)

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Libreria San Giorgio, Calle delle Ostreghe, Venice
(popular and children's books)

Libreria alla Toletta, Saca de la Toletta, Venice
(university books, second-hand books taken on consignment)

Libreria Tipografie Emiliana, Calle Goldone 4487, Venice
(popular books, history of Italy and the Catholic church)

3. Florence: Florence has long been the center of the Italian publishing industry and has now moved into the position of premier publishing center in Europe for high quality printing and reproduction in the fine arts. Of the two leading antiquaria in Florence, Olachki is much the better from the point of view of coverage and reliability. The addresses of the antiquaria are:

Libreria Antiquaria Olachki, Via XX Settembre 56, Florence
(covers all of Europe with agents to handle searching for special materials.)

Sansonini Antiquariato, Via Ricasoli 44, Florence
(old and rare scientific and literary books in all languages
and out-of-print editions; is branch of Sansonini publishing house)

The LIR representative in Florence handles most of the publication business outside of Italy for the organization. The store is almost a full city block long with a very substantial stock on hand and quick communication facility throughout Italy for special problems. The firm will accept desiderata lists for searching any place in Europe. The address is:

Libreria Internazionale Seiber, Via Tornabuoni 7Or, Florence

An American library desiring Italian coverage could depend on Seiber to handle any aspect of its requirements. Other book dealers in Florence and their interests are:

Libreria Internazionale C. Caldini, Via Tornabuoni 89-91r, Florence
(importer of American and European books, Italian coverage mostly
in the arts although does have cartographic compilations and maps)

Libreria dell' Universita di Firenze, Via degli Alfani 39, Florence
(heavy medical concentration since is located in heart of the
medical center; much reduced in size and scope from former
descriptions)

Casa Editrice LE MOINIER, Via San Gallo 47r, Florence
(publisher, wholesaler and importer; handles subscriptions)

Libreria Marzocco, Via Martelli 6, Florence
(very large shop representing most of the publishing houses in
Florence; does not have good foreign connections but is trying
to improve. Principal coverage in cheap editions of current
publications.)

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Libreria Giorni, Via Martelli 35r, Florence
(art and science, second-hand and out-of-print new books)

Libreria L. Cionini, Via de Cerretani 66, Florence
(books on art for serious students; very specialized)

4. Milan: A long and very satisfactory discussion with Sig. Luigi Maurer of Messaggerie Italiane brought out the following interesting points in addition to some already recited in Conclusions above: there are about 2000 publishing houses (by Italian definition of a publishing house) in Italy at present, of which about 150 are really significant; the only publication keeping up with this flow of paper is the "Giornale della Libreria" mentioned above; mechanization of bibliographic techniques is beginning to interest the larger Italian book dealers; and the book industry of Italy is tending toward consolidation. The only significant antiquariat in Milan is:

Il Polifilo, Via Borgonovo 3, Milan
(Sig. Enrico Vigevani is a true collector in addition to being a dealer in that he almost regrets having to sell his books. The coverage is art, science and history of the Milan area.)

Other book dealers in Milan are:

Libreria Internazionale Hoepli, Via Hoepli 5, Milan
(One of the largest book dealers and publishing houses in Europe, but has not yet recovered from war damage to its records and activity. The foreign department under Mr. M. Kreutzman was just in process of moving into new quarters and reconstituting the pre-war files. Kreutzman told me that a direct hit wiped out many years of know-how for special acquisitions. The firm's coverage is across the board in arts and sciences.)

Libreria Antonio Vallardi, Via Stelvio 22, Milan
(school and technical books, maps, dictionaries)

Messaggerie Italiane di Giornale, Rivisti e Libri, S.p.A., Via Unione 3, Milan
(Milan representative of LIR, handles the subscription business for the parent organization, children's books published)

Libreria dello Stato, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele 3, Milan
(government publications of Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato)

Libreria Garzanti, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, Milan
(publisher of books and magazines of popular vein)

Libreria Rizzoli, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele 79, Milan
(travel and popular books)

Bompiani Valentino & Co., S.A., Via Senato 16, Milan
(publisher with numerous outlets, no specialty)

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Libreria Feltrinelli, Via Manzoni, Milan
(general book store, outlet for publishing house of Feltrinelli
(Dr. Zhivago was most important recent effort))

Libreria Bocca, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, Milan
(technical, law, scientific, secondhand books)

Libreria Baldini e Castoldi, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, Milan
(popular editions on technical subjects, travel)

5. Turin: From information available to me before leaving the US, I had concluded that Turin would not be too rich a city for acquisitions. I found that our information was very much out of date. There were several antiquarians of which Libreria B. Bourlot appeared to be superior. The addresses follow:

Libreria B. Bourlot, Via S. Teresa 10, Turin
(proprietor appeared very energetic, stock small but good contacts
made automatic extension of capabilities. Concentrates on the
Turin area)

Libreria Pregliasco, Via Principe Amadeo 55, Turin
(called antiquariat but really second-hand book dealer, catalog is
sent to Library of Congress according to Director)

Antiquaria Giovanni Berruto, Via San Francesco de Paola 10bis, Turin
(very limited stock, deals mostly in second-hand books)

Libreria F.&C. Casanova, Via C. Battisti 7, Turin
(at the Academy of Arts and Sciences; heavy concentration on
art in both books and reproductions)

Libreria S.&C. Lattes, S.p.A., Via Garibaldi 3, Turin
(best outlet in Turin for foreign books of all types)

Societa Editrice Internazionale, Via Garibaldi 20, Turin
(publisher of religious books and social studies particularly on
delinquency of children. This concentration fairly new and may
not continue if not profitable.)

Libreria Cattolica Arcivescovile, Corso G. Matteotti 11, Turin
(school, religious and fiction both domestic and foreign)

Libreria Paravia, Via Garibaldi, Turin
(school, science, art, magazines for sale and subscription)

Libreria "Dante Aligheri", Piazza Carla Felice 15, Turin
(geography, art, medicine, foreign books; large stock)

Libreria Luigi Druetto, Portici Via Roma 223, Turin
(largest shop in Turin, handles output of all major Italian
publishers)

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6. Genoa: Genoa, as Venice, apparently does not have a large book trade. I could find no real antiquariat nor was the Consulate-General able to suggest one. The holdings of the book stores were pretty much the same as those found in the other cities of Northern Italy and not worthy of special note. The shops visited with their addresses are:

Libreria Internazionale di Stefano, Piazza Dante, Genoa
(the largest dealer in Genoa with branches all over town;
exports old editions of classical works but could not really
be called an antiquariat)

Libreria de Bozzi, Via Cairoli 2/ar, Genoa
(located in heart of financial section; heavy on economics and
statistics plus usual art and paper backs; large stock and well
organized)

Libreria Athena, Via P.E. Bensa, Genoa
(university book store, excellent art)

Libreria degli Studi, Via Balbi 40, Genoa
(university textbooks, reference books, art, medicine, science,
little social science)

Recommendations:

Based on the present survey I recommend:

1. That for antiquarian materials on Italy, the best dealer is Leo Olschki in Florence; and
2. That for current book production in Italy, a federation of Italian book dealers known as "Librerie Italiane Riunite" be used through its Florence member - Libreria Internazionale Seeber.